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## 'Sakawa' Booms In Tamale As 14-Yr-Olds Abandon School

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26-Oct-2014

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The rate at which pupils and students are abandoning school for cyber fraud, popularly called 'Sakawa,' has reached alarming proportions in the Tamale metropolis of the Northern Region.



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Primary school children, some about 14-years old, have abandoned school to engage in cyber fraud.

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The Finder's investigations have revealed a disturbing trend where it is common to find pupils sitting at internet cafes in school uniforms during school hours.

These school children are being influenced by the ostentatious lifestyles of adults engaged in cyber fraud in Tamale.

Lately, 'sakawa' has assumed a new meaning. Now, it is being used in relation to 'blood money' rituals, also known as 'sikaduro' in Akan.

Sources close to the paper revealed that people within the working class are now into it with the connivance of some officials of some foreign banks, who usually assist them to withdraw the money at a fee.

The menace is gradually eating away moral values within the society because the 'game boys,' as they are called, are the toast of ladies in town due to the wealth they have accumulated from their activities.

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They ride flashy vehicles, build expensive houses, and wear expensive clothing.

They are gradually establishing a city of their own in some areas in Tamale where they put up expensive houses.

Speaking to The Finder, Regional Police Public Relations Officer (PRO), ASP Ebenezer Tetteh said the canker has serious security implications for the metropolis, and appealed to residents to help the police nib it in the bud.

According to him, the 'game boys,' most of whom are supposed to be in school, are rather desirous of a luxurious lifestyle, hence they engage in 'sakawa.'

The leader of ANBARIYA Sunni Community in Northern Ghana, Sheikh Abubakar Saeed Zakariah, noted that government and Muslim chiefs should have a common platform to discuss ways of containing the canker, which according to him is not only a crucial moral issue but also a serious security threat, which if not tackled has the potential of destroying the youth and the society at large.

According to him, parents have the responsibility of ensuring that their children are brought up according to the morals of society, adding: "Parents who don't question their children about the source of their income when they know very well that the children are still young to acquire those properties and are not employed in any meaningful economic activity have questions to answer."

Sheikh Saeed also charged Muslim clerics to preach against the canker whenever they get the opportunity, especially at funerals, weddings and other social gatherings.

He said that Muslims are enjoined to fight any social issue that affects society negatively with every resource at their disposal, and therefore called on all Muslims to wage a relentless war on the 'sakawa' menace.

"We as Muslims must fight this problem with our strength, knowledge, power, resources, and at least our voices," Sheikh Saeed added.

He noted that 'sakawa' is not sustainable and therefore the 'game boys' would pose a serious security threat to society in the years to come.

"'Sakawa' will not be there forever but let us look at the life of the 'sakawa' people in the post-sakawa era, maybe in the next 10 years," he stated.

He also advised teachers and Muslim clerics to report any pupil or student who engages in 'sakawa' to the parents, and called on the Muslim clerics to boycott the ceremonies of



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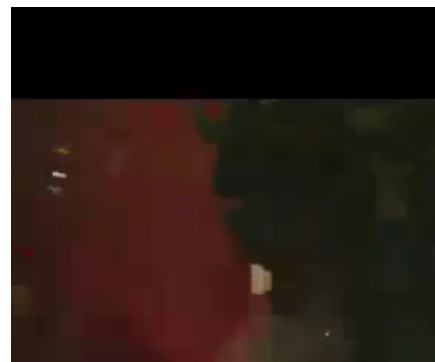
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perceived 'sakawa' dons who have vowed not to stop the immoral act.

The Motor Traffic and Transport Unit (MTTU) Commander of Northern Region, Superintendent Godwin Cashman Blewusie, noted that the police are ready to confront these boys, and called on chiefs and opinion leaders to help them nib the issue in the bud.

"We are seriously committed to making Tamale and the entire region a safe place for all peace-loving people to live in, but we can't do this without the support of the public and the opinion leaders."

Headmaster of a school in Tamale, Mr Abubakari Oluman Saddique noted that the 'sakawa' menace has compounded indiscipline in schools and that pupils under 18 years are now driving flashy vehicles and have abandoned school.

According to him, some of the 'game boys' have abandoned school permanently, noting that if care is not taken the best brains would be lost to the menace.

"Brilliant children who could have grown to be responsible citizens are now engaging in 'sakawa' at the expense of their education," he noted.

The police have also expressed serious reservation about the interference of politicians and duty bearers in their bid to get rid of deviants in the region.

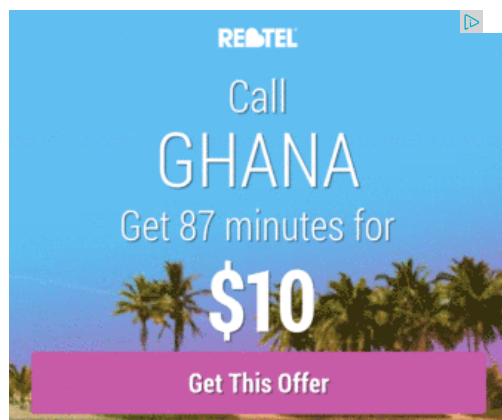
Some of the boys close to the 'sakawa' boys told The Finder that 'sakawa' has now gone beyond the physical cyber fraud and that the perpetrators now seek the assistance of spiritualist to mesmerise their victims.

**Source: Finder**

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